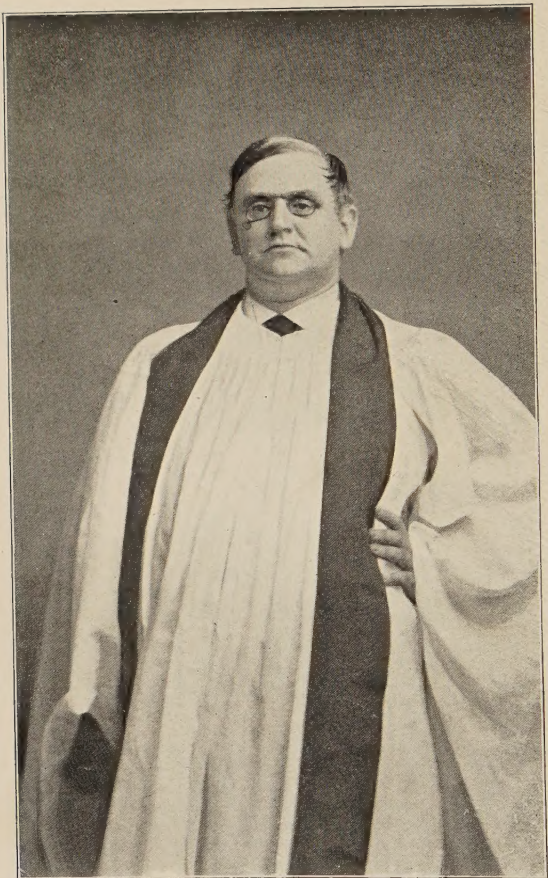




J. N. Apples

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Return



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I am most sincerely Yours
Phillips Brooks

BEST METHODS
OF PROMOTING
SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY THE LATE
PHILLIPS BROOKS
Bishop of Massachusetts



NEW YORK
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CONTENTS.

I.

	PAGE
BEST METHODS OF PROMOTING SPIR- ITUAL LIFE,	I

II.

A COMMUNION ADDRESS,	39
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PREFACE.

THE two addresses published in this volume, delivered before the Church Congress by the late Phillips Brooks, have for many years been lying almost forgotten among the hundreds of other interesting addresses the official reports of the congresses contain. In bringing them to light, the publisher feels that he is doing a service the value of which few will fail to recognize, for the addresses are full of the inspiration and fervor that characterized all the great preacher's written and spoken words. There is no smallest utterance of his that people would willingly let die, and to that wide

circle of appreciative men and women to whom he so long ministered as bishop, priest, or friend, and to that far wider circle of unknown ones, to the outmost limits of which his influence so subtly reached, these two addresses are gladly now sent forth.

BEST METHODS OF PRO-
MOTING SPIRITUAL
LIFE.

BEST METHODS
OF PROMOTING
SPIRITUAL LIFE.

I AM asked to write of the best methods of promoting spiritual life. I take it for granted that it is the personal life that is referred to, the culture of the single soul. It is not the question of the sources and career of those great movements of spiritual life which agitate a whole community ; not the question of revival meetings and all the circumstances of religious awakenings, but it is that old question of the soul asking itself, " How can I best live near to God ? " It is no question for controversies. I think, however much

we differ upon other things, we can very largely come together here, and at this last meeting of our Congress, seem to each other to be not merely members of the same Church, taking different views of our Church's life, but fellow-Christians full of one strong sympathy, one common desire to be more worthy of our Lord and live more truly the life of God on earth.

There is something almost like the creak of machinery about our subject. We want to get that out and leave it all behind. There are no rules, which taken together, make up the directory by which one may live spiritually, and which may be called the method of spiritual life. Life makes its own methods. The very fact that it is vital promises for it variety. What I want to do if I can in this pa-

per, is to indicate the true character of spiritual life in itself, and its true relations to this world in which we live. If we can understand these two things, rules will spring as naturally as the plant always springs when the good seed falls rightly into good ground, with fit differences in different fields.

We start then with this, that the spiritual life of man in its fullest sense is the activity of man's whole nature under the highest spiritual impulse—viz., the love of God. It is not the activity of one set of powers, one part of the nature. It is the movement of all the powers, of the whole of his nature under a certain force, and so with a certain completeness and effect. This friend of mine is an unspiritual man. What does this mean? That there are some

closets in his life which he has never opened? One field of his nature that lies unemployed? One kind of action that he never does? No, but it really means that behind all his actions there is at work, not the higher, but some lower force; not the love of God, but the love of himself, or an interest in his brethren. To make him spiritual what must one do? Not merely open new chambers of life to him, so that, beside being what he is now, a thinker, a father, a lawyer, he shall be also a spiritual man, adding one more life to the many lives which he lives already. One must put behind all these lives some power of spiritual force and unity, by whose inflow they shall be altered, elevated, and redeemed. How to do this; how to bring all the life into connection with

the spiritual force, and then to open it more and more completely to its power ; this is the question of the methods of spiritual life.

It would seem, then, as if in the production and completion of the spiritual man, there were three points or stages which, in our thoughts at least, are capable of separation. There is the gathering of spiritual force outside of a nature, seeking admission ; there is the admittance of that force through the willing assent of the nature itself ; and then there is the occupation of the nature by the force, as it finds out the use of all its least machineries, and stirs the whole of it to action. It is like the way in which the sunlight enters your shuttered house each morning. Then, too, there are three separable times—one while, the

sun fully risen, the sunlight waits outside ready to enter, but not yet in ; another when you open the window and fling the shutter back ; and yet another while the admitted sunlight takes possession of your house, springs from object to object, and from room to room, and summons the color and the life back to the dull and sleepy things it touches. Or shall we say it is like the clear, distinguishable moments when the vital steam waits throbbing in its boiler, when you turn the screw that admits it to your engine, and when its force slowly spreads through all your engine's bulk till every great limb slowly heaves and every little needle trembles and tingles with the pervading life.

Now of the first two of these three periods, so separable in our thoughts, but so blending in

actual experience, we are not called upon to say much here. The force of all spiritual life is the love of God for man. Blindly or clearly known, a Divine life over us, which cares for us, is at the beginning of spirituality in man. The Christian has the assurance of that love, made in the Incarnation, certified upon the Cross, to put it past all doubt and make it infinitely full of powerful appeal to him. But, guessed at by the blindest heathen, or rejoiced in by the strongest Christian faith, that love of God is final in the history of spiritual life. Behind it man cannot go. Man does no more to bring it there where it stands waiting for him to let it in, than he does to gather the morning light out of the midnight darkness and set it outside the closed shutters of his darkened house.

The love of God for man is the fact that lies back of everything ; the lake on the calm summit of the hill above the clouds, out of which all the streams flow down.

And so, too, of the act by which man opens his life to this love of God for him. It is the time when that love of God to him is responded to by a love of his for God. It is not ours to try the delicate and difficult untwisting of those cords of Divine influence and human will which so cling to and love each other. Enough that, tempted by God, a man does open his nature to this waiting love. That which had stood outside as persuasive fact comes into the life as powerful motive, and then the spiritual life is begun.

We come, then, to the third period, the occupation of the na-

ture by this spiritual force of the love of God ; its gradual entry as motive into all the circle of the life. All that a man can do to make that occupation more complete is a method of spiritual life. What he can do, seems to me to be really divisible under three or four very simple heads. He can, in the first place, insist on cutting off and casting away those parts of his life into which it is impossible, by the very nature of the things, that this new spiritual force should enter. Here is the field of self-denial. He can give up every bad habit which is incapable of regeneration and occupation by the Spirit of God. Then turning to those parts of his life which this new force can fill and use, he can do much to make them ready for its occupancy. This he can do by clearing and

enlarging them, which means, by attaining to the ideal conception of them, and by faithfully exercising them. Is it not true that any man makes his trade or occupation ready to be filled by the high motive of the love of God, when he trains himself to look at his trade or occupation in its ideal, and, at the same time, is thoroughly conscientious in its duties? The shoemaker who, having opened his heart to God's love, comes soonest and fullest to find the work of his lapstone and his bench touched and inspired by that motive, will be the shoemaker who most conceives of his daily work as one connected with human comfort and strength, and who, at the same time, is most conscientiously faithful to its details. These things a man can do. He can resolutely abandon

the sins which cannot be spiritualized. He can open all the channels of his life to spirituality by the study of the ideal, and by faithful work in every part of his living. One is the turning out of strangers ; the other is the preparing of the chambers for the entering guest. The one is negative, the other positive. When both are done, then the man who has learnt in one little spot, the conversion spot of his nature, that God loves him, and who has there begun to love God, may look to see that new motive run into these newly opened chambers of his life, making the half-ready places completely ready by its presence, freeing the half-freed machinery by its touch.

Does this mean anything ? Is it capable of being made clear ? I think it is. Here is your aver-

age religious man, spiritual in some regions of his life, in the region of prayer, in the region of worship. He wants to be more spiritual. How can he do it? He can grow deeper in religious life only by becoming more widely religious. He can hold more of the Spirit of God by opening new sections of his life. Greater depth will come only with greater wideness. The true advance for that man to make is not simply to be more religious right there where he is religious already. It is to be religious where he is irreligious now; to let the spiritual force which is in him play upon new activities. How shall he open, for instance, his business life to this deep power? By casting out of his business all that is essentially wicked in it, by insisting to himself on its ideal, of

charity or usefulness, on the loftiest conception of every relationship into which it brings him with his fellow-man, and by making it not a matter of his own whim or choice, but a duty to be done faithfully because God has called him to it. All of these can come only with a firm, devout conviction that God chose for him his work, and meant for him to find his spiritual education there. Doing all these, in every department of his life, with the single intention that the love of God which is already in him may pervade and possess these regions of his activity, is he not cultivating his own spirituality? Are not these the best methods of promoting spiritual life?

I dwell upon such thoughts as these because they seem to me to indicate the truly human

method of seeking for spiritual growth. Do not catch me up upon the word. I mean the method which God has suited to the nature of His human creatures. It goes back for the warrant of spirituality to that first fact of humanity that, in the image of God, God created man. Starting with the intrinsic capacity of man to receive the life of God, all spiritual growth consists in the more and more complete reception of that life. For its reception, the total nature must be opened to its widest. That nature is related to the world around it, to the tasks and pleasures which offer themselves on every side. In the exercise of these relations from low and wicked motive, it is opened to low and wicked life. In the exercise of these same relations from high and spiritual motive,

it is opened to high and spiritual life. That is the simple argument. In two words, it conceives of the spiritual vitality as educated primarily in the spiritual exercise of the ordinary relationship between a man and the world in which he lives, and as exhibiting its results in the regeneration and purification of the essential qualities of humanity. I called it the human method. It stands apart from two other great conceptions of the promotion of the spiritual life. It is different from Mysticism on the one hand, and from Ceremonialism on the other. The mystic, in all his varieties, thinks of holiness as something to be cultivated not by the contacts of life, but by the pure contemplation of God, and the deeper and deeper realization of certain sacred relations between the

soul and Him ; and he looks for the manifestations of holiness in certain theosophic consciousness and conditions of soul, quite separate in kind, from the peculiar movements of our human nature. The ceremonialist sees the true culture of holiness in certain specified acts, in obediences which are technical and arbitrary, and looks for the result of religion in some forms of professionally religious life. The Quaker, disowning sacraments altogether, and the devotee, seeing in the sacraments acts not simply representative of, but quite distinct from, the dependences and obediences of common daily life—these are the types. One with his devotion to the inner experience, the other with his consecration to the outward exercise ; both have departed from this human

conception of spiritual methods. One makes religion meditation, the other makes religion discipline—asceticism, in the meaning that is indicated by its derivation. But religion is more than either ; it is life.

The mystic and the ceremonialist indeed are in us all. There is no perfect education that has not both these elements in it. All life opens into the machinery of ceremony below, and into the abstractness of mysticism above ; but the ordinary, healthful, life-giving processes of the world go on, neither under ground nor in the clouds, but on the earth in the light of day, and on the solid soil. So, all men who live the full life will have their hours of mystical experience, and will sometimes invoke the aid of arbitrary disciplines ; but their real culture

will be in the daily duties of their lives, and will show its result in the deepening and strengthening of those primary qualities of humanity which all men recognize and honor.

I cannot read the life of Jesus without feeling that it was to this human culture of the spiritual life, that He was always leading. This was His constant struggle with Pharisee and Sadducee. Against the ceremonialist, who would have asked the proof of His holiness in punctilious obedience to the Law of Moses, and the mystic who would have demanded of him utter separation from the things of sense, He came eating and drinking, and pointed for the proof of His mission to works of mercy, and the daily intercourses of love. He asked men to own Him as their Lord, be-

cause He showed in their Divine completeness the qualities, and filled with Divine perfectness the relations of humanity. That was the power of the Incarnation. He appealed directly to the human heart to understand Him, with its native perceptions quickened by His presence. "Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip?" The testimony of holiness was to be in deepened humility, patience, truthfulness, love, the old primeval human graces. The Christian was to be the perfect man, wrought into the image of God again, through the obedience of the Son of Man. That was Christ's power; and the Bible, again and again, takes the same tone, and makes the process of redemption to be the regeneration of man into his true self by the faithful use and treat-

ment of the world in the obedience and love of God. Every perversion of practical religion has been by the loss of the idea of this human culture in one or other of the two directions of which I have spoken. •

Let me point out what seem to me to be some of the benefits, which come from as complete an association as possible, between the processes of spiritual growth and the natural duties and relationships of human life ; from the human culture of holiness by life, as distinct from the mystic culture by meditation and self-consciousness, and the ceremonial culture by discipline and formal rites.

First, think of its continuity. In all artificial religiousness, all that is not bound to life, educated through life, and uttering itself in life, there are gaps and

breaks. It is the sadness of every Christian experience. The loveless times between the moments of ecstatic apprehension, the total secularness between the points of religious performance. One of two things must come—either that terrible separation between the religious and the secular regions of our life, which is the ordinary condition of religious people, or the hopeless attempt to narrow the life down to that limited range of feeling or behavior, in which alone is any chance of religion contemplated. The Spirit of God, expected only at certain seasons, and by certain doors, finds sometimes those doors closed, and no welcome waiting Him at any other. It is only when we know that any door capable of admitting any influence may admit the blessed in-

fluence of God, only then can we be hopeful of keeping the breadth and variety of life, and at the same time of always receiving the culture and the grace of God. Let only the western shutters be open, and we shall only see the setting sun. Let all the windows be unclosed and expectant, and from sunrise around to sunset there shall be no interval in the unbroken light. The sun, in the course of the day, will look into them all.

And again, with this vital or human culture of holiness, there belongs the thought of the variety of the spiritual life ; first its variety in the individual experience, and then the variety among the differing lives of various Christians. We have all read the biographies of mystics and ascetics, and felt how monotonous they were ; and then we

have read the story of some human Christian, whose holiness was trained through the activities of a busy life, and uttered itself in the deepened and purified human qualities, and how varied that seemed, what play and movement there was in it. The pietist's contemplations and the ceremonialist's rites are the same from day to day, and in all men. They lose the rich personal, rare and true distinctions of mankind. Their methods of sainthood give to-day no new character beyond yesterday, and the nineteenth century no difference from the fourteenth. But if religion be cultivated in the doing of our utterly different works, and declare itself in the renewal of each man's own personality, then every man and every age will utter the spiritual life in some vernacular and

color of its own ; and each will bear witness of itself that it is Christ's, by the way in which Christ has emphasized its special character.

And again, by becoming more bound in with human life, the spiritual culture becomes more intelligible, and so more influential to the world around us. Our devotion, like our doctrine, seems utterly incomprehensible to half the men we meet. It seems to be perfectly technical—the thing for people of a certain make, as music is for men with ears for harmony, and painting is for men with eyes for color. There is hardly anything more trying to the Christian sense than the phrase “the religious public” as describing one set or section of the community. What could interpret this unknown life to men? Nothing

so strongly as a really human way of cultivating and living it upon the part of those other men who are called Christians. To see that you are growing holy through contact with the same things that make them wicked, and that by being holy you bring to their true depth and lustre those qualities which, faded and dull, they honor still among themselves, that is the strongest influence which can go forth from you to make your brethren rise up and go with you to God.

But, perhaps, most of all it is the reality of the great life-culture of holiness that gives it its value. The spiritual experience grows so unreal to us. The earthly things we seek stand out so sharp and clear. The heavenly things are so intangible and vague. It is not enough to

point to the weakness of our spiritual nature. There is something wrong about our method, that to us, laymen and ministers, the dear and solemn things of God so often seem vague and intangible. Is it not largely that religion stands so far apart from life, that the methods of spiritual growth do not seem to lie in these common things and tasks of every day, and that the fruits of spiritual life, Joy, Peace, Righteousness, do not seem to be the perfection of, but something quite of another kind from the Joy and Peace and Righteousness with which we are familiar among men?

What is this world for, and what are these human relationships trying to do? Let me say, very earnestly, that that is the question which has underlain a very large part of the difficulties

with which we have dealt this week. It is the sense that that question is not answered in our churches ; that the Church is not set forth to be the ideal of human being, which keeps the masses from our ministry. It is the consciousness that the Christian life which they are expected to proclaim and train, is artificial and unhuman, that keeps many noble young men from our ministry. It is a technicalness creeping up from our fundamental conceptions of Religion into our tunes and hymns, that paralyzes our church music. Nothing but a forgetfulness of the largeness of the ideal Christianity as a world-embracing power, could have bred the vices or the dangers of our Church government. All the narrow limitations of the great preaching power have their deepest root in some me-

chanical unhuman notion of religious life. Out of this have come the false and superstitious notions of the Bible which complicate the question of Revision. And, remembering the discussions of this morning, it becomes us most seriously to inquire whether the Christian's frequent forgetfulness of the true purpose of this earth and all the relations that grow out of it, as the ministers of the spiritual culture of humanity—his failure to claim for it its profoundest relations to his soul and God, has not had much to do with the startling agitation of the question whether the earth has a purpose, and beyond this, whether that soul and that God which claimed so little from and laid so little hold upon the great clear world and its relationships, were more themselves than dreams.

The family, the social life, the school, the shop, we dread and deplore the godlessness that often seems to be taking possession of them. But has it no connection with the neglect or the refusal of religious men to see in them the true culture-places of their profoundest piety, and with their unwillingness thoughtfully to ask if the religion which conceives of itself as an aggregate of such qualities as these places have no education for, is not erroneously, imperfectly conceiving of itself? The home, school, and shop must be here on the fairest hillsides and plains of the world for something. If we will not claim them for their best use, and by our use of them exalt them to their best explanations, we need not wonder at the low and godless explanations which men give of them. When

we are willing to see in them the ministrations of God ; when men, asking us for the means of grace, are pointed, first of all, to the duties and relations of their lives as the places where they will meet God, where they will find the deepest experiences, conviction of sin, utter humility, the need of Christ and the ideal of holiness, then how the dead earth and all that is upon it will glow with, a fire that no materialism can quench. Till then, so long as we fail to use the world for spiritual culture, no wonder it be dead, and who cares whether the dead thing sprang from the hand of a creator or took shape out of chaos by a force as dead as itself ?

The final spiritual state of man is pictured as a heavenly city, a place of thousand relationships springing out of his human na-

ture. The training place of his spiritual life must be a city, a place of many relationships as well. And the soul touched by God must hear what Paul heard : " Go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

Continuity, Variety, Influence, Reality, these are the things after which our spiritual life is hungering and thirsting. To grow spasmodic, monotonous, uninfluential, unreal, is not this the familiar death of the spiritual life that saddens many a closet and many a church ?

I know full well the shallow look which may be given to all that I have said. I know that I may have seemed to set forth a superficial Gospel of activity and work, too thin to hold any of the deep joys or sorrows, the infinite fears and hopes of the human heart touched by the

finger and slowly moving on into the life and peace of God. But I have not meant that, and I do not think that I have said it. I have not said superficially that to labor is to pray. Prayer lies behind all; but I am sure that by the finite act of labor the infinite act of prayer is helped to its completeness as the soul grows by the body's ministries to its perfect life. Labor which is conscious of ministering to prayer—that is, of giving the soul deeper perceptions of God and of itself, grows proud of and rich in its mission. It catches much of the loftiness of prayer itself. It goes enthusiastically and buoyantly upon its way, sowing the spiritual life, as the disciples went up the road to Sychar to buy bread for Jesus, while He sat waiting by the well.

It is evident enough that for such a method of promoting spiritual life as I have dwelt upon, there is no set of rules to be put forth. No manual of devotion, and no practice of any drill will bring about that healthy relation to all life which shall make it all minister to godliness. Faithfulness in the work of men for the fear and love of God, what rules can one give for that except the rule of ceaseless vigilance and perfect humility. But this is evident, that if the Church in every age had bound the outward life to the inward experience, and declared righteousness to be the true culture of faith, she would have been wiser than she often has been for her children's spiritual life. And it is evident, too, that any revival of religion which deals only with emotional experiences or with

ritual forms, and does not preach the culture of faith by righteousness, has not revived religion into perfect permanent vitality. And it is evident, too, that any man seeking to be holy who does not set himself in close live contact with the life about him, stands in great danger of growing pious or punctilious instead of holy. No book or discipline that separates a man from human life truly cultivates his spirituality. The noblest book of devotion in our literature, the "Holy Living" of Jeremy Taylor, has its value here, that it is neither a rhapsody of mystical sentiment nor a Directorium of religious behavior ; but a simple, manly effort to bring the highest task to every spiritual motive and the highest spiritual motive to every task.

The man of the world, as we

call him, has the tasks but not the spiritual motives. The Christian has the spiritual motives and is sometimes ready to think that that supersedes and makes unnecessary the task. There comes the strange unfaithfulness which we often see in earnest religious people, not the least often in ministers. But it is possible for the man full of God to meet the world full of God, and to find interpretations and revelations of his Master everywhere. The Christian finds the hand of Christ in everything, and by the faithful use of everything for Christ's sake, he takes firm hold of that hand of Christ and is drawn nearer and nearer to Himself. That is, I think, the best method of promoting spiritual life.

A COMMUNION ADDRESS.



PHILLIPS BROOKS

TAKEN WHEN RECTOR OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNION ADDRESS.

IT is the good custom of our Church Congress, a custom observed, I believe, from the very beginning of its meetings, that they who are to take part in it should draw near to the table of their Lord before they give themselves to the study and discussions of His kingdom and of His truth. It is good that we should enter into His Spirit ; that we should come to this great representation of His love and mercy ; that we should understand how He welcomes us here, before we begin that, to which we believe that He also welcomes us, the effort to understand our duty and His will.

It is good for us to turn to some word of Christ, and to let that word sink into our hearts and manifest something of the righteousness of His will, and the abundance of His wisdom.

May I ask you to turn for a few minutes to the verses at the beginning of the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, where it is said : “ Jesus entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city. And behold, the multitude brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed : and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy : Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee.”

And then, in the latter part of the same chapter, in the midst of the same discourse, there are written these words : “ And when the devil was cast out, the

dumb spake : and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”

It would seem as if Jesus would offer, both by His word and by His deed, that which He desired to declare. And this declaration, made both by mouth and by hand, contained a surprise, a mystery, and, as did all the surprises of Jesus, this surprise opened itself by and by, and then there came a great and deep teaching. This is always the case that, when Jesus comes to us, first there is a surprise, and then there is always a higher truth that lies within. Wherever there is a wonder, we are sure that if we listen with our hearts we shall hear, out of the depth of that mystery, some richer teaching, some large revelation of His truths. A small and superficial nature gives us a

surprise, and it simply exasperates and worries us, because we are perfectly sure that the man could have said the same thing in some plain and unmysterious way ; but when Jesus speaks to us and there is that in His word or work which for the moment perplexes and bewilders us, we are sure that there is something worth the seeking after, and so we go below the surface and join together the broken parts, and try to succeed to a deeper understanding. The surprise which came to the disciples of Jesus, and to those who were looking on is clear enough. In the first instance they brought to Him a man sick with palsy, and in the second instance a man who was dumb, that He might touch the poor quivering limbs, that He might speak to the poor man whose speech had been

taken from him, and give him again the power of utterance. That was what they were looking for, and in either case there came a surprise and a disappointment. Looking upon the man who was quivering and shaking with the palsy, Jesus said : " Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Then, looking at the man who was unable to answer Him, Jesus bade the devil to depart. In both cases Christ turned away from the physical condition by which the man was afflicted and spoke to the spiritual condition which lay beneath the physical pain. When a miracle is wrought, when the man has heard the address of Jesus, then there comes to him the fullness of physical life.

It is exactly as if a man stood in the midst of some great house and expected some welcome

guest who was to come ; he stands facing one door through which he thought the guest would enter, suddenly he hears a noise behind him, and lo ! the guest is coming by another door, and turning around, the host finds that although his guest has entered in some unexpected way, he is already filling the whole room with his life and presence.

So these men were standing and looking at the physical incapacity and necessity, and while they stood there, not yet looking for the richer movements of the power of God, suddenly the whole house was filled, and the door through which they had expected Him to come was still open to receive that higher light which had come through the manifestation of God to the spirit of man. Can we not see at once the meaning of such

mysterious treatment? Is it not that great assertion which Jesus is always making of the wonderful unity of our human life, and of the way in which the whole structure of mankind, in all its departments, in all its various chambers, is completely one, so that its individual compartments will be ignored, so that it will be as if it had no chambers; it shall be filled with the one great invasive power of God, to whom it all belongs.

Is there a richer teaching? Is there a more fundamental doctrine of our Lord Jesus? In our treatment of one another, we are always cutting up our lives into cells and chambers, as if each were to receive a special gift, as if each were to grow rich by itself, while all the rest of the nature might go unblest. My friend gives me his wisdom

upon one side, and his medicine on another side, and his practical judgment upon another side, and each one seems to enter one chamber of my life, and I am a little richer, but all the rest of my life may be as poverty-stricken as before. Just as soon as we leave the gift which our friends give us, who are especial in their relationship to us, and come to the just relations which one man holds toward his fellow-men, we begin to have this feeling of the oneness of the life which receives and of the life which is bestowed. There is not one of us who has not had behind all the teachers who taught him, behind all the doctors who have healed him, behind all the specialists who have come to him—there is not one of us so unfortunate that there has not been at least once or

twice some great friendship which has sounded through and through. You cannot tell what this friend did for you. It was not that he made you wiser or stronger. It was that he made you more of a man, and threw the totality of his life into the totality of yours. He took your life as one great chamber and filled it with himself. It is what our fathers and our mothers did for us in the beginning of our lives. We dare not call them our teachers, or the healers of our bodies. They are the friends, giving their entire life to the entire life of others, and filling the whole being from end to end with all that they have the power to bestow.

If this be so of our best friends, shall it not be especially and supremely true when we come to the great gift of God? He is

the giver of His entire life to our entire life, so far as we shall be able to receive it at any moment. He is always pressing more and more upon us in this life, according to the special nature of him upon whom He would bestow the richness of His blessings. At whichever door He enters He gives Himself completely to the whole, and occupies the human nature with Himself.

We turn to the great parable of the Incarnation, which is not simply a great event in history, but is the working of God's salvation, by which He enters into our entire human life.

What shall I say of Christ? Shall I say that He is simply the Teacher? I call Him teacher, and rejoice in His teachings. Shall I say that He is a healer and a helper? I thank Him

every day for the way in which He helps me and points out the path in which I should walk. It is vastly more than that. Behind all this special Help He is the Divine man. We do not come to the fulness of the understanding of Him until He not merely helps us here and there, but until He reveals Himself in and gives His redemption to our entire life, pouring the fulness of the Godhead into our poor weak humanity, which is the child of God, just as far, and just as fast as that humanity is capable of receiving it.

We come thus to know what is the salvation that Jesus brings. The salvation of Christ is nothing less than this, the entire occupation of the human life by the Divine life. Everything else is preparatory to that. Everything else is done by Jesus

Christ's blessed grace. In order that that may come to pass, He forgives our sins. He helps us in special difficulties. It is His one great purpose that He shall fill my nature with His nature, which is the nature of the eternal God, who is my Father.

It seems to me, my friends, that in these days of discussion and dispute it is good for us to recognize what God is really doing with the world. It is not simply bringing to this world old truths, so that man can deny or accept them. The question with men to-day is, not whether they deny or accept the truth which God reveals. It is not a time of acceptation or rejection. It is a time of understanding. It is a time of definition. What God is calling upon us to do is to define our truths. We cannot stand before one of the Chris-

tian Gospels to-day and say simply a word of denial or acceptance. We must know what it means. It is a time when down below, beneath these chambers, the truths of some deeper chambers are ever opening up to us. The divinity of Jesus ; the new life ; the eternal judgment, the atonement and life and death of Christ—every one of them is not a simple truth, is not a simple statement to be accepted or rejected to-day. They are all truths to be more deeply understood, and the wondrous fact of this time is that God is not simply helping us in from chamber to deeper chamber of the meaning of those truths, but through one chamber into a richer chamber that lies beyond the deep mountains of the truth which He long ago revealed to the heart of man. Shall not all this

apply to the thought of the salvation of man by Jesus Christ? Is man saved by Christ? Yes or no? That is not the question. First of all, what is it to be saved by Jesus Christ? You may make it very mean and mercenary. You may make it splendid and grand. You may conceive of it in the richness of this great truth, that God occupies human nature with Himself, and so gives it salvation. For surely we limit too much man's chance for God; we limit too much God's chance of man, since the two are ever seeking one another by an impulse which is in the Divine heart, and which never absolutely ceases to be operative in the human heart. God and man belong together. Naturally, therefore, every seeking by man of something greater than the life he is living now

must be a seeking ultimately after God, and God in every movement of His nature, by the revelation of Christ, must be seeking that medium of the human soul in which He would sit Himself down and be its spiritual master.

Shall we not believe that there is no place where a man can stand upon the earth, and dig into its depths, that he shall not find God, and find his own soul?

The artist, standing in divine consecration of his art; the many of letters standing by and seeing the glory of telling any truth; the scientist trying to reveal some new principle which is to be developed in the world; the practical man trying to set the world a little more right in its action; the statesman trying to let no hindrance come upon the great wheels of the govern-

ment—shall we not say to each one of them that he is working in sympathy with that great movement which is the one essential and important thing which is going on in the world, the calling of the soul of man by the soul of God?

Men are questioning to-day whether art and literature, whether politics and government, whether science and culture shall be substituted for religion. My friends, the only way of insisting that these things cannot be substituted for religion is profoundly to assert that, if they measure their deepest meaning, they are religious. The only way to insist that they shall not be rivals in the great faith, and in the great spiritual life in which we live, is to insist that they shall not merely be confederates, but that they shall be a

part of it. Teach your own souls that wherever you stand upon God's earth, if you can only go deep enough to find God, you will find your own soul. The trouble with art and literature, with philosophy and science is not that they are too great, but that they are too little for the finding of God. God is speaking His word, and God is ready to find access to the soul of man through all of them. Salvation is universal, healthful to body, mind, and spirit, so that the saved man can stand before his Saviour in the humility which his life, his completed life, could alone attain, and can say : " I thank Thee, my God, that Thou hast made me whole."

There is not a discussion with regard to the salvation of mankind, with regard to when and where this salvation shall take

place, which we have any right to approach except through the medium of the full understanding of what it is for a creature like man to be saved by a life like God's. Let us keep this truth in our minds, because it is the truth which we shall need. It is a special truth that we ought to remember as we come to this engagement which shall occupy the next few days. Many of us have become deeply attached to the Church Congress. We believe that it has done vast good in our Church. It has been a great source of light throughout the Church, which God, whose life has been in it, has offered, in the first place, to His Church, and which the Church has had the wisdom to accept.

Shall not this great truth be made manifest, that God is for-

ever trying to occupy the whole of man with the whole of Himself, by one great being, that He comes through many doors and by many ways, and yet always does the one great act which He is trying to do? Shall not this truth throw light upon the things which we have discussed and shall discuss in these our gatherings? Whatever door He comes through, He is the same guide, and entering through any door, He struggles to fill the whole great temple with Himself. Your door may be different from my door. The door of one time may be different from another time. Sometimes through one door and sometimes through another comes the great Christ power to take possession of the soul itself. There are abundant instances in which Jesus approaches the soul of man

through the body, giving to the heart its even beat and to the blood its cool and tranquil flow. In trying to do for the spirit, He comes to the soul through the body, and in other cases to the body through the soul. He is pressing down upon the whole structure, finding His way through any chink which may stand open. Let us rejoice and bid Him welcome as He tries to take part in that which we are trying to do, as we consecrate ourselves to the service of Him who desires to occupy the soul of man. We learn more and more, and we rejoice to learn that that simplicity which is to come, not by exclusion but by inclusion, is to come by many thoughts of God and their basis in the great thought which is one. The many thoughts of God have their basis in the great

thought which is but one, the many deeds their root in the great activity which is one completed service. Many senses have opened and revealed to us that there is below some one great universal basis and substance of sense. Though this sense or that sense may perish, it is not lost, but through other channels the great truth manifests itself. Humanity loses itself in its multitude, only to find itself in the great human substance out of which it comes. So must it be with the influences that are at work in the world. We will not eliminate, we will not banish, we will not try to banish, we will not try to ignore one of them, but we will believe that underneath them all there are two others, the one great longing of the Infinite Love, and the one great neces-

sity for the universal God. Let us not think that all this teaches the doctrine that art is as good as religion, that science is as true a messenger as revelation to the soul of man. Just as in the cathedral a messenger may come through any door, and yet find his way under the great dome, and still there is one great westward door through which the great light most certainly will come, while we are looking for it, and while we feel that we are most sure to see its coming. So it is with the teachings of the Divine life to the human soul. Religion need not fear. Religion has suffered from its own panic as much as from any other cause. How strange it is that religion has seemed to fear when man has come and offered the help of his agencies and confederacies. Let

us receive them all. Wherever man is earnestly seeking to live a higher life, wherever man is reaching after some duty, after some truth, let us know that in the wonderful movement of his soul he is reaching after God, and then let us come to him with the great spiritual truths: "Here is the crown of your desire, here is the fulfilment of your hope. Here is He whom you sought. We have found the Christ, the Son of God."

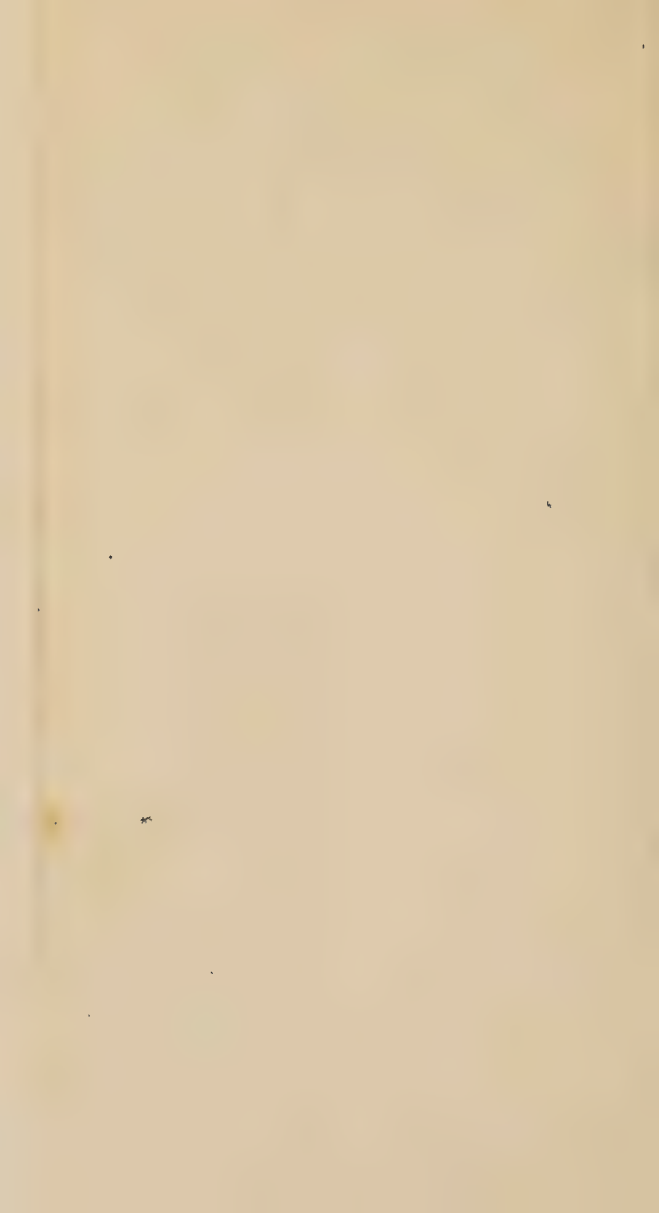
I cannot but think that in every way, but especially in that particular way which belongs to this symbolic service in which we are to engage, the truth which we have been considering is set forth before us. Look at the simplicity of this great mysterious feast, or the Lord's Supper. What is it that is given us here? The bread and wine, the

universal food of man, that which makes all men strong. It is not a jewel which is put into your hands, that you may become a little richer, it is not a truth, taught to your mind that you may become a little wiser. It is not a tool, that you may be a little more effective, but the man who eats the bread and drinks the wine is made a stronger and purer man through and through. He eats the bread and drinks the wine, accepts that for which it is a symbol, and he consecrates himself through all his nature by that great strength which comes to him through the universally pervasive bread and wine.

Religion, spiritual life, faith, vision, worship, they want to go deeper, they want to grow finer, they want to grow purer, but to be all of these they must be larger. They must all compre-

hend that there is no part of man which may not receive the inspiration of God, and no activity of man which may not be the door, and into which and through which cannot enter that power of God which makes the man indeed to be God's servant.

There is some such largeness of faith and strength coming to us as we bow now at our Lord's table, and may it make us a little more fit to go where the feet of the Lord's children must go, into whatever understanding they may attain of the problems of His kingdom and the mysteries of His truth. Amen.





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